

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5313

INFO USNATO 1118

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

S E C R E T REYKJAVIK 0482

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NATO, SP

SUBJECT: SPAIN AND NATO

REF: STATE 91998

1. I MET YESTERDAY WITH MFA SECGEN PETUR THORSTEINSSON ON SUBJECT AND DURING LENGTHY DISCUSSION USED ALL APPROPRIATE POINTS IN REFTEL. HIS REACTION WAS NEGATIVE. HE THOUGHT THAT ANY CHANGE IN NATO RELATIONSHIP, INCLUDING A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF SPAIN'S CONTRIBUTION TO NORTH ATLANTIC DEFENSE, WAS PREMATURE BEFORE "FRANCO DEPARTS FROM SCENE." HE SAID THE SUBJECT WAS ONE ON WHICH ALL

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NORDIC MEMBERS OF NATO WILL STICK TOGETHER, AND THAT ICE-

LAND WOULD FOLLOW WHATEVER NORWAY DECIDES TO DO, WHICH HE INDICATED HE FELT WOULD ALSO BE NEGATIVE. HE SAID HE WOULD DISCUSS SUBJECT WITH FONMIN AGUSTSSON, BUT WAS SURE HE WAS REFLECTING HIS VIEWS.

2. THIS MORNING THORSTEINSSON TOLD ME FONMIN SAID "WE SHOULD LET THINGS STAND AS THEY ARE FOR TIME BEING." HE WAS NOT KEEN ON ANY CHANGE AT PRESENT. THORSTEINSSON INTIMATED AGUSTSSON WOULD HAVE DIFFICULTY WITH LEFT WING OF HIS PARTY, THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS AND THE COMMUNIST PEOPLES ALLIANCE IF HE TOOK ANY OTHER POSITION ON MATTER AND ACCORDINGLY WAS NOT GOING TO STICK HIS NECK OUT ON IT.

3. THIS AFTERNOON I HAD OCCASION TO MENTION SUBJECT TO PRIME MINISTER. HE WAS NOT AS NEGATIVE AS FONMIN AND MFS SECGEN AND FELT THAT HE, AT LEAST, WOULD LIKE TO KEEP AN OPEN MIND ON IT. HE SAID A LOT WOULD DEPEND ON HOW THE ENDORSEMENT OF SPAIN'S ROLE IS DONE AND THE TIMING.

4. COMMENT: THE DIFFERING VIEWS OF BOTH FONMIN AND PRIMEMIN ARE NOT SURPRISING. THEY DISAGREE ON ALMOST EVERY ISSUE OF FOREIGN POLICY, BUT FOR SAKE OF COALITION HARMONY GENERALLY FOLLOW FONMIN'S VIEWS UNLESS FONMIN'S VIEWS CREATE PROBLEMS FOR US-ICELAND DEFENSE RELATIONS. IN SUCH CASES, PRIMEMIN WILL WEIGH IN HEAVILY TO SHOW SUPPORT FOR US DEFENSE POLICY. HE IS OF INDEPENDENCE PARTY. FONMIN IS PROGRESSIVE PARTY. ON PARTICULAR SUBJECT OF SPAIN AND NATO, ICELAND WILL ULTIMATELY BE GUIDED BY NORWAY.
IRVING

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